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Software Engineering Institute**

CERT
Situational
Awareness

AirCERT: Building a Framework for Cross-Administrative Domain Data Sharing

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FloCon 2004: Complementary Architecture Panel

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Background

- Form situational awareness for the SEI, its sponsors, and the Internet community
 - Big picture view of threats
- Constraints
 - Situational awareness can only be formed with data from many organizations – all data is governed by the constraints of its owners
 - Must provide a reasonable value-proposition for data sharing
 - Strict hierarchies in data sharing will not scale
 - Solutions must be built with open and transparent architectures



Analytical Concerns

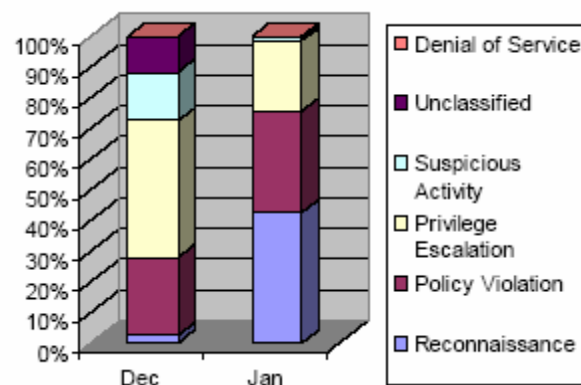
Focus on merging and analyzing data from multiple view points

- Distinguish between targeted, localized, and Internet-wide activity
 - Widely targeted services
 - Clusters of attacks
 - Passive detection of new tools
 - Attack techniques *de-jour*
 - Attack sources
- Historical trending
 - Enable forward estimation of expected intruder activity of a site

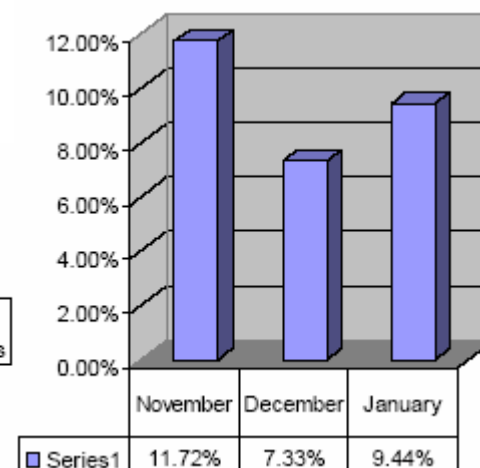
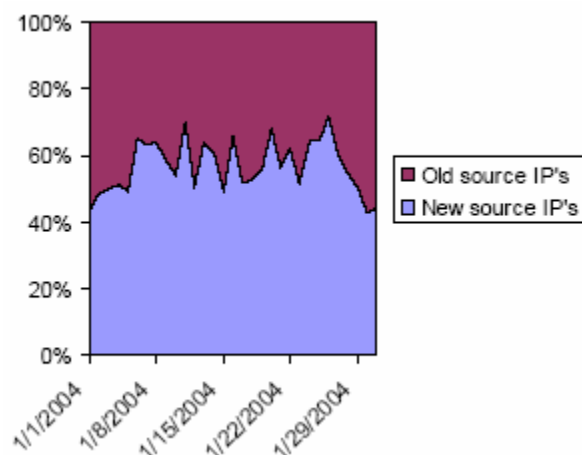


Current Results

- Generating “Top 10” lists and volumetric measures based on
 - *Packet/Flow features*: IP addresses, ports, protocols, signature, etc.
 - *Context*: timing, vulnerability, country, net-blocks, etc.



Share Source IP addresses
Targeting multiple
organization





Implementation

- <http://aircert.sourceforge.net>
- Gather data from existing security solutions already deployed
 - Partner with security operations in the federal civilian community and in academia
- Write “glue” to integrate, convert, analyze, and share the data across organizations
- Provide analytical results back to participants and sponsors



Synthesized Data

- Categorization
 - SIM/SEMs (e.g., ArcSight)
 - IDS (e.g., Snort)
- Discovery
 - Flow data (e.g., argus)
- Refinement
 - Network topology information
 - IT/data data sharing policies
- Context
 - Vulnerability (e.g., CERT/CC KB)
 - Artifacts (e.g., CERT/CC AC)



Collection Infrastructure

- Provides infrastructure to *automatically* extract relevant information from existing instrumentation
 - If human intervention is required, sharing is too expensive
- Wrote “normalizers” to handle the reformatting and semantic transformation of the data
 - Too many vendor to write one-off tools for each
 - Write transformation engine that understands the underlying data-store: text files, RDBMS, etc.



Sharing Infrastructure: Collection

- The key to facilitating data sharing across organizations is
 - Making it seamless – no human interaction
 - Ensuring policy compliance
- All “normalizers”, “publishers”, and the underlying storage architecture have a notion that all data has an owner
 - Dissemination respects site’s local policy
 - Sanitization of sensitive data
 - Tagging of all data with a source identifier

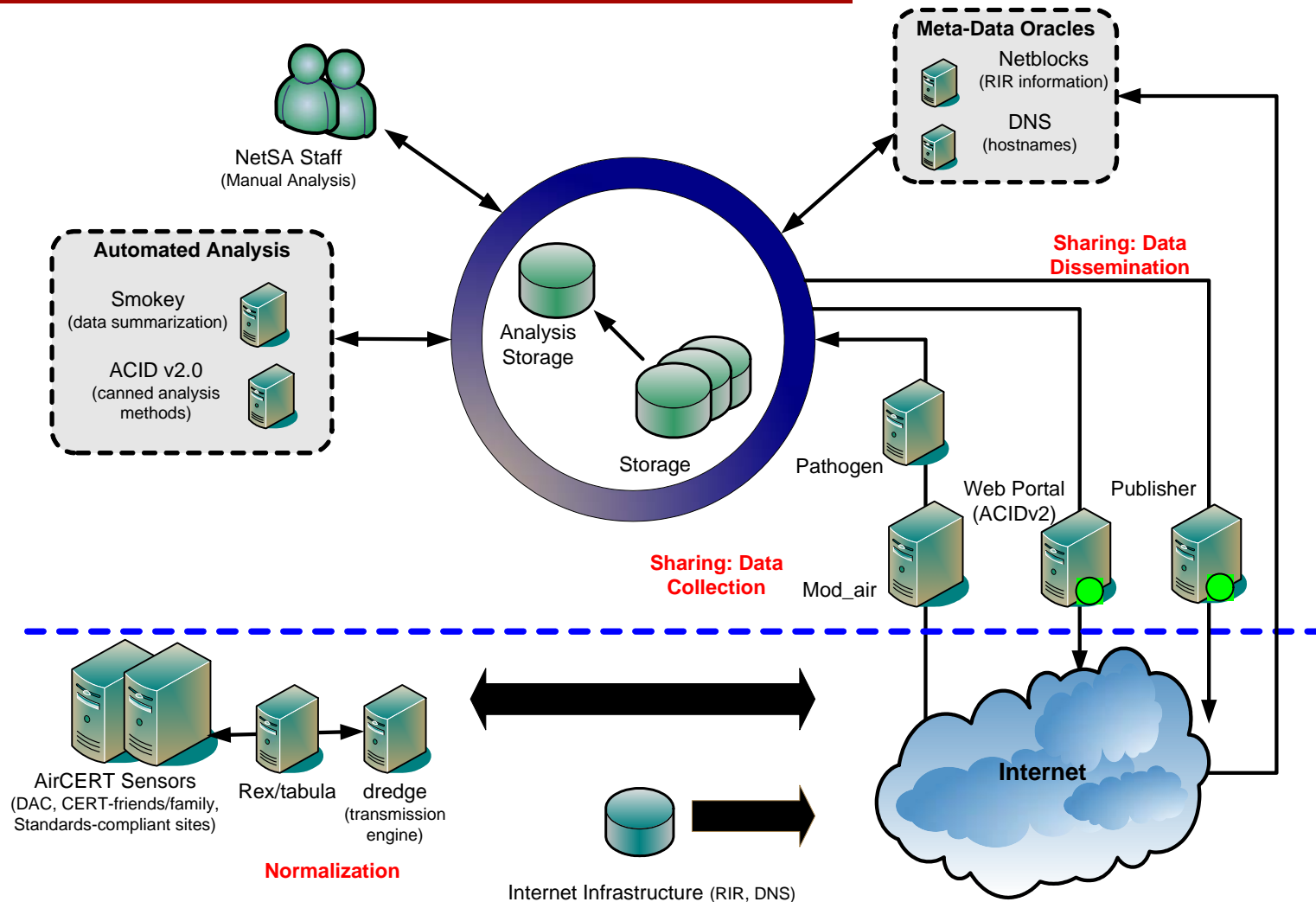


Sharing Infrastructure: Dissemination

- Sharing data with us, is no different than data with others
- Tailor channel for the audience
 - Web-portal for pre-digested snapshot
 - Export bulk-data in a machine-readable format (e.g., XML, RSS)

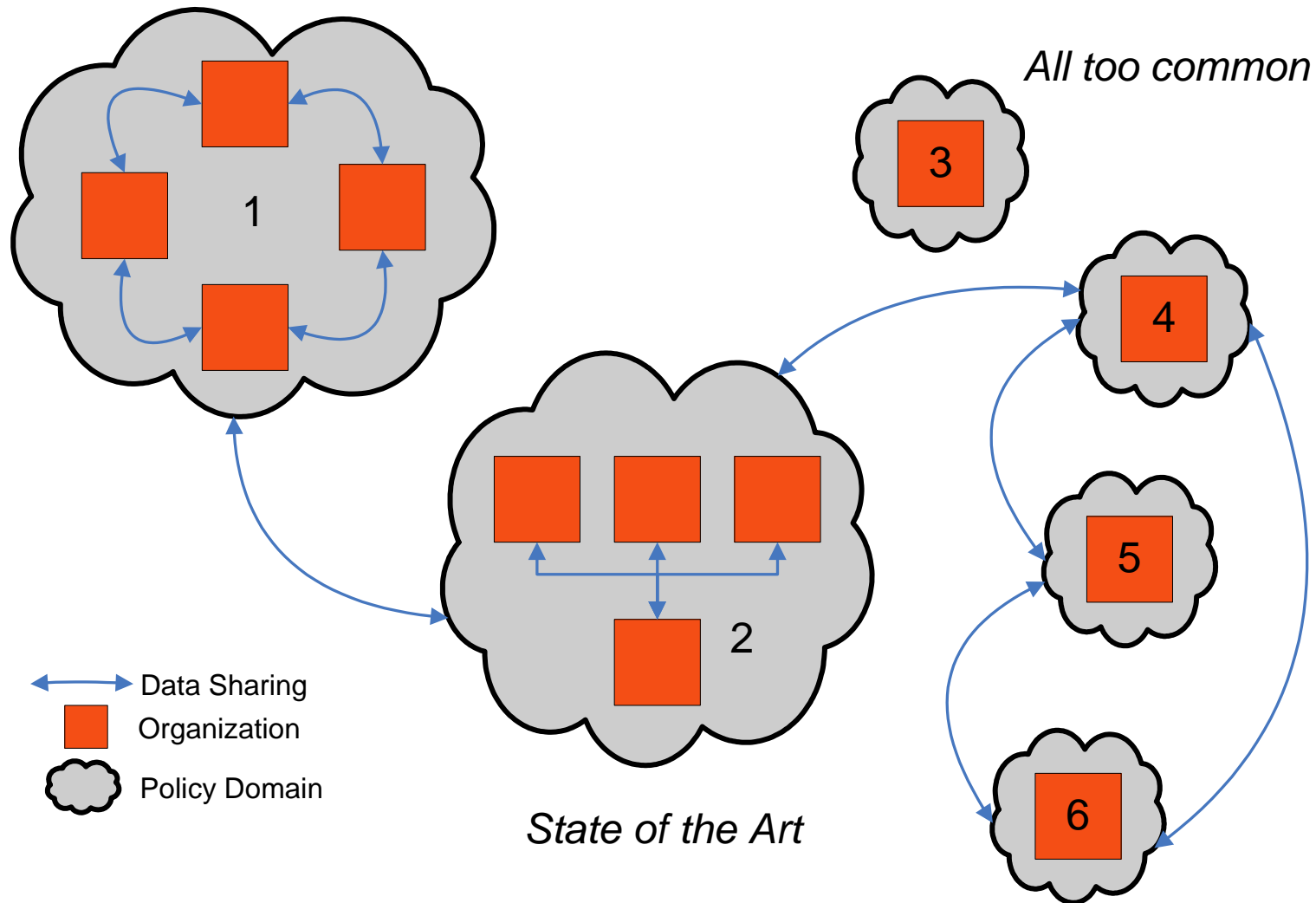


Architecture





Big Picture Architecture





Challenges and Solutions

- Many different formats used by the SEM and IDS products
 - Support standards efforts: IDMEF, IODEF, IPFIX, PSAMP
 - Storage-specific normalization tools
- Normalizing signatures across IDS products
 - Using CVE and custom classification taxonomies
- Analyzing the correct signature set
 - Use only explicit malicious activity
 - Filtering out policy violations and poorly written signatures
 - Use the correct tool for the task
 - Deploy non-IDS sensors next to the IDS
- Data loops
 - “Checksums” in the meta-data of the data stream



Challenges and Solutions

(2)

- Need both push and pull model, while supporting varied levels of automation
 - Unified presentation engine (ACIDv2)
 - Publisher for bulk-data transfer



Ongoing Work

- Intelligent end-points that summarize instead of sending all data
- Automated ways to overlay the context provided by vulnerability and artifact information
- Continued support for standards work
- Improved attention focusing techniques for flow data-to-IDS and vice versa
- Improved approaches for integrating the analytical products into operations